

U.S. VA History SOL VUS.2 .3

Early European Exploration and Colonization

Early European exploration and colonization resulted in the redistribution of the world's population as millions of people from Europe and Africa voluntarily and involuntarily moved to the New World.

Exploration and colonization initiated worldwide commercial expansion as agricultural products were exchanged between the Americas and Europe. In time, colonization led to ideas of representative government and religious tolerance that over several centuries would inspire similar transformations in other parts of the world.

Characteristics of early exploration and settlements in the New World

New England was settled by Puritans seeking freedom from religious persecution in Europe. They formed a “covenant community” based on the principles of the Mayflower Compact and Puritan religious beliefs and were often intolerant of those not sharing their religion. They also sought economic opportunity and practiced a form of direct democracy through town meetings.

The Middle Atlantic region was settled chiefly by English, Dutch, and German-speaking immigrants seeking religious freedom and economic opportunity.

Virginia and the other Southern colonies were settled by people seeking economic opportunities. The early Virginia “cavaliers” were English nobility who received large land grants in eastern Virginia from the King of England. Poor English immigrants also came seeking better lives as small farmers or artisans and settled in the Shenandoah Valley or western Virginia, or as indentured servants who agreed to work on tobacco plantations for a period of time to pay for passage to the New World.

Jamestown, established in 1607 by the Virginia Company of London as a business venture, was the first permanent English settlement in North America. The Virginia House of Burgesses, established by the 1640s, was the first elected assembly in the New World. It has operated continuously and is known today as the General Assembly of Virginia.

Interactions among Europeans, Africans and American Indians (First Americans)

The explorations and settlements of the English in the American colonies and Spanish in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, often led to violent conflicts with the American Indians (First Americans). The Indians lost their traditional territories and fell victim to diseases carried from Europe. By contrast, French exploration of Canada did not lead to large-scale immigration from France, and relations with native peoples were often more cooperative.

The growth of an agricultural economy based on large landholdings in the Southern colonies and in the Caribbean led to the introduction of slavery in the New World. The first Africans were brought against their will to Jamestown in 1619 to work on tobacco plantations.

Institutions of European Economic Life Take Root in the Colonies

Economic institutions in the colonies developed in ways that were either typically European or were distinctively American, as climate, soil conditions, and other natural resources shaped regional economic development.

The African slave trade and the development of a slave labor system in many of the colonies resulted from plantation economies and labor shortages.

Economic Characteristics of the Colonial Period

The New England colonies developed an economy based on shipbuilding, fishing, lumbering, small-scale subsistence farming, and eventually, manufacturing. The colonies prospered, reflecting the Puritans' strong belief in the values of hard work and thrift.

The Middle colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware developed economies based on shipbuilding, small-scale farming, and trading. Cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore began to grow as seaports and commercial centers.

Virginia and the other Southern colonies developed economies in the eastern coastal lowlands based on large plantations that grew "cash crops" such as tobacco, rice, and indigo for export to Europe. Farther inland, however, in the mountains and valleys of the Appalachian foothills, the economy was based on small scale subsistence farming, hunting, and trading.

A strong belief in private ownership of property and free enterprise characterized colonial life everywhere.

Social Characteristics of the Colonies

New England's colonial society was based on religious standing. The Puritans grew increasingly intolerant of dissenters who challenged the Puritans' belief in the connection between religion and government. Rhode Island was founded by dissenters fleeing persecution by Puritans in Massachusetts.

The Middle colonies were home to multiple religious groups, including Quakers in Pennsylvania and Catholics in Maryland, who generally believed in religious tolerance, Huguenots and Jews in New York, and Presbyterians in New Jersey. These colonies had more flexible social structures and began to develop a middle class of skilled artisans, entrepreneurs (business owners), and small farmers.

Virginia and the Southern colonies had a social structure based on family status and the ownership of land. Large landowners in the eastern lowlands dominated colonial government and society and maintained an allegiance to the Church of England and closer social ties to England than in the other colonies. In the mountains and valleys further inland, however, society was characterized by small subsistence farmers, hunters and traders of Scots-Irish and English descent.

The "Great Awakening" was a religious movement that swept both Europe and the colonies during the mid-1700s. It led to the rapid growth of evangelical religions such as the Methodists and Baptists and challenged the established religious and governmental order. It laid one of the social foundations for the American Revolution.

Political life in the colonies

The New England colonies used town meetings (an "Athenian" direct democracy model) in the operation of government. Middle colonies incorporated a number of democratic principles that reflected the basic rights of Englishmen. Southern colonies maintained stronger ties with Britain, with planters playing leading roles in representative colonial legislatures.

The Development of Indentured Servitude and Slavery

The growth of a plantation based agricultural economy in the hot, humid, coastal lowlands of the Southern colonies required cheap labor on a large scale. Some of the labor needs, especially in Virginia, were met by indentured servants, who were often poor persons from England, Scotland, or Ireland who agreed to work on plantations for a period of time in return for their passage from Europe or relief from debts.

Most plantation labor needs eventually came to be filled by the forcible importation of Africans. Although some Africans worked as indentured servants, earned their freedom, and lived as free citizens during the Colonial Era, over time larger and larger numbers of enslaved Africans were forcibly brought to the Southern colonies in what has been called "the Middle Passage".

The development of a slavery-based agricultural economy in the Southern colonies would lead to eventual conflict between the North and South and the American Civil War

Name _____ Block _____

Answer the following questions from the reading:

- 1. In what two ways did early European exploration and colonization change the world?*
- 2. List several characteristics that describe the settlement of the New England colonies:*
- 3. By whom and for what reason were the Middle Atlantic colonies settled?*
- 4. Generally, what two groups settled Virginia and what was their motivation for settlement?*
- 5. What is the significance of Jamestown?*
- 6. What effect did European settlement have on Native Americans?*
- 7. What effect did the growth of an agricultural economy based on large landholdings have on the Southern colonies?*

8. Identify:

Covenant Community

Cavilers

Indentured servants

Jamestown

House of Burgesses

- 9. What types of “natural phenomenon” effected the growth of the economies in the American colonies?*

10. Describe the economic characteristics of:

New England colonies

Middle colonies

Virginia and Southern colonies

11. What was the social basis for...?

New England's colonial society:

The Middle colonies:

Virginia and the Southern colonies:

12. In what two ways did the plantation based agricultural economy of the Southern colonies satisfy its need for labor?

13. Eventually, what was the main source of the South's labor needs for their plantations?

14. "The New England colonies used an "Athenian" model in the operation of government." Explain this statement.

15. Identify:

Cash crop

Dissenter

Great Awakening

Indentured servant

The Middle Passage